

10/661,682

Claims:

1. (previously presented) A method in a data processing system of tracking tools in a power plant service environment where a plurality of power plant facilities are interconnected in a Web-based environment over a communications medium with a tool depot wherein the tool depot houses a tool inventory used for providing a plurality of service activities to the plurality of power plant facilities, the method comprising:
 - providing a database containing information associated with respective tools in the tool inventory;
 - including in the database information uniquely associated with at least a first tool in the tool inventory;
 - assigning the first tool to a person at a power plant facility;
 - recording data at the power plant facility that associates the person with the first tool;
 - creating an electronic tool order document containing information associated with at least the first tool wherein the tool order document is transmitted over the communications medium from the power plant facility to the tool depot; and
 - checking the database in response to receipt of the electronic tool order document at the tool depot to determine a status of at least one tool contained within the tool order document; and
 - creating a purchase order document for a tool in the event the step of checking identifies the status of the tool as unavailable.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - updating the database with at least a portion of the recorded data sufficient to associate the person with the first tool.
3. (canceled).

10/661,682

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

creating an electronic default shipment document containing information relating to shipping at least the first tool from the tool depot to the power plant facility wherein the electronic default shipment document is automatically populated with at least a portion of the information transmitted to the tool depot in the electronic tool order document.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

creating an electronic shipment document containing information relating to shipping at least the first tool from the tool depot to the power plant facility wherein the electronic shipment document is automatically populated with at least a portion of the information transmitted to the tool depot in the electronic tool order document.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, the step of creating the electronic tool order document comprising:

populating at least a portion of an electronic tool order form displayed in an interactive Web page with information relating to at least one of the power plant facility and the tool depot and the first tool;

accessing the database over the communications medium from the power plant facility; and

selecting at least the first tool via an interactive Web page from at least one of a predefined tool list displayed in the Web page and a browse function displayed in the Web page wherein the browse function is configured to search the database and display information contained in the database associated with respective tools in the tool inventory.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

updating the database in response to filling the tool order wherein a quantity of respective tools contained in the database is decremented by a quantity of the respective tools shipped to the power plant facility.

10/661,682

8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

including in the database information describing a status in response to receipt of the electronic tool order document wherein the status is indicative of tracking at least the location of tools identified in the electronic tool order document between the tool depot and the remote facility.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

updating the database in response to filling the tool order wherein a quantity of respective tools contained in the database is decremented by a quantity of the respective tools shipped to the power plant facility;

including in the database information describing a condition of at least one tool prior to the at least one tool being shipped to the power plant facility;

assessing the condition of the at least one tool received at the tool depot from the remote facility;

updating the database in the event the step of assessing determines that the condition of the at least one tool has changed;

generating an invoice reflecting the cost of using the shipped tools at the remote facility; and

transmitting the invoice over the communications medium from the tool depot to the remote facility.

10/661,682

11. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

including in the database information describing a condition of at least one tool in the tool inventory;

including in the database information describing a status of at least one tool in the tool inventory;

receiving at least a tool at the tool depot wherein the tool is being returned to the tool depot from the power plant facility;

assessing the condition of the tool; and

updating the database with information describing the condition of the tool in the event the step of assessing determines that the condition of the tool has changed.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

the electronic tool order document containing information associated with at least the first tool wherein the electronic tool order document is transmitted over the communications medium from the power plant facility to the tool depot;

creating an electronic shipment document containing information relating to shipping at least the first tool from the tool depot to the power plant facility wherein the electronic shipment document is automatically populated with at least a portion of the information transmitted to the tool depot in the electronic tool order document;

creating a return electronic shipment document containing information relating to shipping at least the first tool from the tool depot to the power plant facility wherein the electronic shipment document is automatically populated with at least a portion of the information transmitted to the tool depot in the electronic tool order document;

including in the database information describing a condition of at least the first tool prior to the first tool being shipped to the power plant facility;

assessing the condition of at least the first tool after its return to the tool depot;

updating the database in the event the step of assessing determines that the condition of the at least one tool has changed; and

updating the database with information indicating that the first tool is no longer assigned to the person at the power plant facility.

10/661,682

13. (previously presented) A method of managing and tracking tools used in a power plant service environment wherein multiple power plants require services that necessitate the multiple utilization of an inventory of the tools stored in at least one tool depot, the method comprising:

- providing a database containing information describing the inventory of tools;
- providing access to the database to respective end users at each of the multiple power plants via a communications medium;

- communicating over the communications medium an order for a set of tools to a tool depot;

- populating a shipping document with information relating to shipping the set of tools from the tool depot to a power plant;

- creating an electronic purchase order document for the purchase of at least one tool,

- wherein the electronic purchase order document is created in response to the order for the set of tools in the event at least one of the tools ordered is not available from the inventory of tools.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

- accessing the database from the power plant so that an end user at the power plant may search the database via an interactive Web page for selecting at least one tool in the set of tools; and

- selecting the at least one tool via the interactive Web page to create the order.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

- automatically updating the database with information changing a status of the at least one selected tool.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

10/661,682

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
receiving the at least one purchased tool at a tool depot; and
updating the database with information indicative of a quantity of the received tool.
19. (original) The method of claim 18 further comprising:
updating the database with information indicative of at least one of a status and a condition of the purchased tool.
20. (previously presented) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
receiving notice at a tool depot that the at least one purchased tool has been shipped by a vendor wherein the at least one purchased tool will be drop-shipped to a power plant;
initiating a billing cycle for charging a cost to the power plant for use of the at least one purchased tool; and
updating the database with information indicative of changing a status of the at least one purchased tool from on-order to job-assigned.
21. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
updating the database with information indicative of at least one tool of the set of tools having been shipped to the power plant;
initiating a billing cycle for charging a cost to the power plant for use of the shipped tool; and
stopping the billing cycle associated with the shipped tool on receipt of the shipped tool at the tool depot.

10/661,682

22. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

defining at least one tool kit comprising at least a subset of the inventory of tools;

storing data in the database indicative of information describing the at least one tool kit; and

communicating an order for the at least one tool kit over the communications medium to a tool depot.

23. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

creating a bill of lading containing data indicative of at least one of a Schedule B Number and an Export Control Classification Number and a Harmonized Tariff Schedule in response to the tool order.

24. (original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

including in the database information uniquely associated with at least a first tool in the inventory of tools wherein the order for the set of tools includes the first tool;

checking out the first tool to a person at the power plant;

recording data at the power plant that associates the person with the first tool;

transmitting over the communications medium at least a portion of the data entered in the step of entering; and

automatically updating the database with at least a portion of the transmitted data sufficient to associate the person with the first tool.

25. – 33. (cancelled).

10/661,682

34. (previously presented) A method in a data processing system of tracking tools in a power plant service environment where a plurality of power plant facilities are interconnected in a Web-based environment over a communications medium with a tool depot wherein the tool depot houses a tool inventory used for providing a plurality of service activities to the plurality of power plant facilities, the method comprising:

receiving a first tool order from a first power plant facility wherein a need for the tool is identified as supporting a scheduled maintenance service at the first power plant facility;

receiving a second tool order from a second power plant facility wherein a need for the tool is identified as supporting a forced outage at the second power plant facility; and

In the event that the first tool order and the second tool order request a same item, assigning priority in the data processing system to the first tool order over the second tool order in response to the identification of the forced outage at the second power plant.